



PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA: HOW RELEVANT CAN CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES BE?

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the philosophy of education and social transformations in Nigeria and the imperative of curriculum and pedagogic practices. The study used the philosophical method of analysis, clarification, and criticism to explore the relationship between philosophy of education and social transformation and the imperative for curriculum and pedagogic practices in Nigeria's education system. From the findings of the study, curriculum development and sound pedagogic practices can stimulate learners' cognitive and psycho-social skills, which can translate to critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among the learners. It can also engender creativity, self-reliance and social re-awakening, which are necessary ingredients for social transformation and the national development agenda through inspiring students to become agents of social change, participate in active citizenship and transform oppressive environments. A nation's philosophy of education can also inform educational policy decisions and determine curricula processes and pedagogic practices. However, the paper revealed that challenges of poor curriculum implementation, inadequate funding of education, foreign curriculum model and poor teacher training can obstruct the road to social transformation and national development. The study concluded that proper curriculum development in the area of adherence to the principles of flexibility and utility in curriculum construction and sound pedagogic practices by teachers by way of proper mastery of subject matter and the use of good teaching methods and techniques can foster social transformation and national development; and that without a strong philosophical basis, policy and practice of education can lack a coherent, sound, and unified objective. The researchers recommended that there should be a curriculum review by relevant stakeholders in education, that teachers should be trained and updated on their job as role models to learners, that the government should fund education adequately in the provision of teachers and learners' welfare, in infrastructural development and in creating the enabling environment for both teaching and non-teaching staff, and that the government should also address the issues of education policy formulation in a manner that is devoid of inconsistencies and excessive reliance on foreign orientations.*

KEYWORDS: Philosophy; Education; Social transformation; Curriculum; Pedagogical practices.



INTRODUCTION

A nation's education system is the most powerful instrument for social and cultural changes, economic reform and political stability. Amaele & Okere (2016) posit that a good education system is both a process and a product. As a process, it is guided by procedures aimed at producing capable human beings. And as a product, education activities and processes anchor in the production of acceptable, self-reliant, dependable, effective and efficient citizen(s). The product of education is the educated man who is a recipient of maximum awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes which enable the individual to improve the quality of his life and that of his society. This type of education is characterised by the combination of the elements of culture, morality, manners, science, technology and application of relevant knowledge, creativity, valuable skills and positive personal values.

For Dewey 1936; education should develop methods for problem-solving, and its aim should be the development of the learner's intellectual ability, acquisition of vocational skills, democratic ideals and citizenship, and the development of self-reliance and ability to cope adequately in a world of pressing problems. He believes that the function of education is to enable human beings to access their experience within their environment and to devise relative methods by which they can interact with the social environment for survival and growth. For him, education has a social objective, and that has to do with creating adaptability and problem-solving capacity of the individual within his social environment. His views on education can perhaps best be described in terms of a contrast with what he calls the orthodox view of experience that is accepted by both the traditional empiricists and their opponents. The orthodox view treats experience primarily as a knowledge affair, while Dewey views experience as intercourse between a living being and his physical and social environment. His emphasis on experience is a necessary condition for growth, and his social philosophy is based on participation of all citizens, freedom and equality of educational opportunities. He hopes that his views on education would help to bring schools into closer relations with the home and society in introducing subject matter that would have positive significance in the child's life. Dewey opines that teachers have a role to play in order to achieve this educational philosophy. They would act as enforcers of rules of conduct and communicators of knowledge and skills in a manner that allows their students to play a role in creating their own knowledge. In this social process, the teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on the position of a democratic leader of group activities and uses his intelligence and experience to recognise experiences that would lead to growth and generate educational quality with particular individuals at a particular time.

Dewey's view on education contrasts sharply with the traditional philosophers such as Durkheim, Plato and Aristotle, who have postulated on the various functions of education. Durkheim 1956; described education as the socialisation of the younger generations in a systematic way so that they may imbibe the religious and moral beliefs of national consciousness and collective opinions of all kinds. Plato 1945; believed that education directs human rationality to justice and a good life. His ethical proposition was based on the four cardinal principles of temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. These principles, according to him, would ensure that the state is governed by men of great knowledge and intelligence in order to ensure objective good on which the good of the state is based. For Aristotle, man has in his soul a rational principle which is rooted in the conviction that nature stands as a capacity for development inherent in particular things and aimed at a particular end or purpose, both in



respect to physical and moral phenomena. He argued that a rationally minded person would take decisions and actions based on good reasons rather than emotions.

Aristotle believes that education has a multifaceted purpose, that is, to equip the members of the society to live as partners in a flourishing life – purpose served by cultivating intellectual virtues that are enacted in a flourishing life, virtues sufficient for collective wisdom in civic partnership in living well, and dispositions and bonds of civic friendship (Aristotle, 1904).

Education is a process of human development. As a process, it is concerned with varying activities such as teaching, learning, administering and constructing curriculum. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the educational process involves the concepts of policy formulation; curriculum construction in terms of aims of education, contents or subject matter to be taught to achieve the aims, methods used in teaching and learning, and the society which is considered in the process of determining the aims of education. Nigeria's engagement in education is to ensure that the individual is fully integrated into a sound and effective citizen for his own development and contribution to the society. The philosophy of education is based on making the individual socially relevant, economically efficient and politically conscious.

In pursuance of the education goals, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) states that the goals of education in Nigeria are as follows:

- a. Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- b. Provision of equal access to qualitative education to everyone;
- c. Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and;
- d. Development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Notwithstanding the role of education in enhancing the individual's capability for self-development and contribution to society, there are numerous problems and challenges which need to be tackled. These are, among others, issues of streamlining educational philosophies, funding of education, curriculum reform and effective pedagogical practice. This paper, therefore, attempts to explore the relationship between the philosophies of education and social transformations vis-à-vis the curriculum and pedagogical practices, focusing primarily on the secondary education system in Nigeria.

For the purpose of clear arguments and valid conclusions, the study begins with clarification of the concepts of philosophy, education, philosophy of education, social transformation, and curriculum and pedagogy.

The Concept of Philosophy: For Dewey, in general, philosophy is both a product of human culture and a process of criticising or clarifying it, distinguishing meanings within and helping to give it direction and form. In *Experience and Nature*, he speaks of philosophy as criticism or criticism of criticism, as the critical operation and function become aware of themselves and their implication. It becomes a kind of theory of criticism consideration of alternating ways of critically evaluating values and beliefs. Meaning and values are focal in Dewey's conception of philosophy, and this aspect is not lost when he treats philosophy as a general theory of



criticism. For him we criticize for the sake of instituting and perpetuating more enduring and extensive values; and each of the various philosophical disciplines, metaphysics no less than the others, makes its distinctive contribution to this end.

Philosophy as a field of study is concerned with the examination of education activities and their worthwhileness. That is to say, philosophy is a process of clarifications, verification and criticism of concepts or ideas in particular activities. On what philosophy can contribute to educational theory, Nwaogu,(2015) is of the view that philosophy is an instrument for examining a nation's educational system – primary, secondary and tertiary – by means of justifications and criticism. In other words, philosophy can bring about intelligent order, responsibility and efficiency into a nation's chaotic educational situation by means of analysis, clarifications, justification and criticism.

The Concept of Education: Dewey noted in his book, *Democracy and Education* (1916) that education is a constant reorganisation and reconstruction of experience; and that the aim of education should be the development of the child's powers and abilities. He opines that it is impossible to lay down any definite principle for a particular kind of development, because this development will differ from one child to the next, in conformity with the unique abilities of the individual. The educator should guide the child according to the abilities and powers he observes in the child. It is better, in Dewey's opinion, to leave the question of educational objectives unanswered. If a definite aim is ascribed to education, it may do very great harm by compelling the teacher to guide the learner in a particular direction and not in keeping with the innate abilities of the child. In general, he believes that the aim of education is to create an atmosphere in which the child gets an opportunity to be active in and contribute to the social awakening of the human race. From the pragmatic standpoint, education aims at creating social efficiency in the child. Man is a social being who must develop within the confines of society, outside which he cannot develop at all. For this reason, education must aim at creating social efficiency and skill.

Concept of Philosophy of Education: Philosophy of education can be referred to as the application of philosophy in a specialised way to the consideration and solution of educational problems. "It is the theory of education in its most general phases." Dewey (1943:33). In simple terms, education philosophy refers to the use of philosophical tools, theories, principles and methods for the elucidation and solution of education problems (Aminigo & Nwaokugha, 2006:8).

The main task of the philosophy of education is the systematic, critical analysis and clarification of concepts, issues and propositions in educational practice. It is the use of philosophical methods, instruments and theories to understand and find solutions to educational problems.

Concept of Social Transformation

Schools are institutions of society for social change. Education is, therefore, a basic instrument for social and cultural change. It equips learners with knowledge, skills and abilities to enable them to live effectively and efficiently in the present society so that they may advance it. Education should have relevance for social adequacy. According to Ukeje 1976; the educational system must be geared to the needs, the circumstances, and the aspirations of the people it is meant to serve. To do this successfully, it must have a national purpose; it must



reflect the culture in order to preserve it, improve it and guard against its imperfections. Therefore, curriculum development and pedagogic practices are key to social transformation in Nigeria's education system.

Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum has to do with all the experiences, both planned and unplanned, to which students are exposed and from which they learn in the school. For Kearney 1960; contends as follows:

...that curriculum is a complex of more or less planned conditions under which students learn to behave and do behave in their various ways. In it, new behaviour may be acquired, present ones may be modified, maintained or eliminated; and the desirable behaviour may become persistent and viable. Those who plan educational experiences must account for the effects upon the learners of all aspects of the community, of the home, and of the school.

From the above viewpoints as to the conception of curriculum, the following appear implicit:

- i. It is the opportunities provided to pupils in the school to enable them to learn. Such opportunities would also include courses or subjects mapped out as a requirement for certification.
- ii. The planned experiences are deliberated and systematic and include school subjects, outdoor school activities, industrial work experience, teaching practice exercises, guidance-orientated activities, etc. The unplanned experiences are inculcated but are both enriching and educational.
- iii. Relevant resources have to be utilised and provided to ensure the realisation of educational goals.
- iv. The curriculum should be adapted to changing circumstances to ensure currency, relevance, and sustained interest in the experiences being provided.

Philosophy of Education and Social Transformations

Philosophy of education promotes societal development by influencing the purpose, methods, and content of education to build a more equitable, democratic and cohesive society. It frames education as a tool for personal and collective growth that addresses real-world problems. Philosophical and educational frameworks such as critical pedagogy, progressive education and classical theories such as Aristotelian and Platonic can provide useful insights into a nation's education system.

Social development is a concept encompassing critical thinking and social justice. Advances in social justice and equity philosophies like social reconstructionism focus on using education to solve social problems such as racism, poverty, and inequality. It helps identify and challenge power hierarchies and biases within educational institutions in order to promote inclusive practices and social change.

Philosophy of education can transform a nation's educational system and foster social transformations. We shall now proceed to examine how this can be achieved.



The Mechanisms of Educational Philosophy in Social Change

The Social/Democratic function: Educational philosophy can foster democratic society, enhance civic participation and encourage collaboration and dialogue. Dewey's progressive philosophy of education view schools as social institutions that can model and strengthen democracy and as well, enable learners to acquire knowledge for both rightful living and effective participation in society. Education enables individuals to be involved in civic activities like voting and community organising; and contribute to social inclusion by fostering critical thinking skills needed for informed decision-making in a democratic society. Furthermore, educated individuals can encourage collaboration and dialogue. Approaches like dialogic education emphasise the role of discussion in teaching and learning creating collaborative-environments where diverse points of view can interact. This helps students learn to work with others and respect diversity.

The Critical/Empowerment function: Educational philosophy can empower marginalised groups, challenge the status quo and adapt to social change. Critical theories in the philosophy of education empower historically marginalised groups to question oppressive systems. This creates a more inclusive and egalitarian society by valuing diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives. Education based on critical and social justice philosophies can inspire students to become agents of change. It encourages active citizenship and enables people to transform oppressive environments into democratic and inclusive ones. A robust philosophy of education allows a society to be flexible and adaptable, responding effectively to constant changes like globalisation, new technologies and shifting cultural values. This can provide the sense-making strategy needed for societal evolution.

The Structural/Curricular function: Educational philosophy can shape educational policy, influence curriculum development and transmit cultural values. A nation's educational philosophy serves as a conceptual blueprint for its educational policies. It ensures policies are relevant and aligned with the societal ideology, needs and aspirations of its people. Without a strong philosophical basis, policy and practice can lack a coherent and unified objective. Philosophical principles help shape what is considered valuable knowledge, influencing the subjects taught and how they are presented. Social reconstruction, for instance, focuses on a curriculum that examines social, economic, and political problems to address societal issues. Education is the primary process through which a society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and cherished values from one generation to the next. Philosophy helps clarify which values are most worthwhile to preserve in culture.

Philosophies of education often focus on developing the whole individual, including their intellect, character, and morality. This helps to equip people with relevant knowledge, skills, and values needed for a meaningful and fulfilling life, contributing to a higher quality of life for societal overall progress.

Philosophy of Education and Social Transformation: How Relevant Can Curriculum and Pedagogic Practices Be?

Educational theories of classical philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and the Deweyan theory have postulated the role of curricula and pedagogy in a nation's education system. In Aristotelian philosophy, education should train human beings to learn what is right to do and then to do it. He believes that education should aim at changing human beings to effectively



choose and do what is good rather than selfishly pursue their individual desires; the ideal of the virtuous man is that he lives the good life because he is a good man, a man devoted to the pursuit of objective goodness rather than the fulfilment of his own desires, a realist rather than a sophist. He thinks that in this way, the individual would belong to and help to build a democracy of worth as opposed to a democracy of desire (Okere, 2021).

Education for Plato meant turning the eye of the soul from darkness to light; that is, leading a person from the dark cave of ignorance into the limelight of knowledge. In this instance, the child makes efforts to learn by himself. The teacher only facilitates or stimulates the child's learning and does not learn for the child. In learning parlance, it is the rediscovery of knowledge based on the child's reasoning process. Thus, education for Plato is a rediscovery of previously acquired knowledge based on a metaphysical philosophy of man. Plato believed that each man's soul had a previous existence in an ideal world, called the world of ideas – perfect firsthand knowledge of all that exists in this world. Plato conceptualised an educational process which aimed at not feeding the mind with new knowledge but rather, through well-framed, leading questions, eliciting the right answers – a method of teaching called the Socratic Method.

Both the teacher and the learner are important in Plato's educational philosophy. The learner is regarded as a person with an immature mind. The learning activity depends on him, and self-learning is the best method for teaching him. However, because his mind is immature, he needed external resources in terms of the cultural norms and factual knowledge to develop his mind. The teacher is, therefore, the person to do the presentation. He needs to teach by example as a being who is nearer the perfect ideal of personality and worthy of emulation. His role is to awaken and stimulate the mind of the learner to pursue knowledge and virtue and to impart knowledge of the forms, the ultimate reality, until he has acquired self-discipline to learn by himself. The teacher is, for example, a model of all that is good, upright and beautiful; one who respects the personality of the pupils as the centre of learning; a friend and a guide to the learner. The teaching methods should include the self-learning activity of the child and the positive influence of the teacher since he is an ideal model to be imitated. The dialectical or Socratic method of inquiry – the method of questions and answers which enables the mind to exercise – was also advocated.

Deweyan pedagogy called upon teachers to perform the extremely difficult task of reinstating into experience the subject matter of the curriculum. This subject matter, like all human knowledge, was the product of man's efforts to solve the problems that confronted him in experience, but, as a formal body of knowledge, it had been abstracted from the problematic situations where it had originally developed. Traditionalists argued that this knowledge should simply be imposed on the child in a sequence of steps determined by the logic of this abstracted body of truth. However, when presented in this fashion, the material was of little interest to children. Moreover, it did not allow them to discover knowledge on their own by doing activities in which it was necessary for them to have a certain type of knowledge. In this model, Dewey argued that children were told how to do something rather than given the freedom to discover, first-hand, how to do it themselves. As a consequence, teachers had to appeal to interests unrelated to the subject matter, such as the child's fear of pain and humiliation. Dewey called upon teachers to 'psychologise' the curriculum by constructing an environment in which the activities of the child would include problematic situations. In order to solve these problems, children would have to call on their knowledge and skills of science, history and art.



In effect, Dewey posited that the curriculum should tell the teacher, 'Such and such are the capacities, the fulfilments, in truth and beauty and behaviour open to these children. Dewey emphasised the need for planning curriculum to be flexible and adaptable to the interests, needs and aspirations of the child (Okere, 2022).

Dewey believed that the educational process has two aspects, namely: psychological and social. In the psychological aspect, the curriculum and the method of education should be determined by the child's instincts and abilities. The child should be educated according to his interest and inclination. Education should be attempted only after discovering the interests of the child, and these should be used as the basis for determining the curricula for the various stages of education. Also, in the social aspect, Dewey argues that all education has its beginnings in the individual's participation in the social consciousness of the race. Hence, it is necessary to create an atmosphere in the school which will allow the child to take an active part in the social awakening of his group. This will improve his conduct and develop his personality and abilities.

Dewey has stressed the following four principles as underlying the formation of educational curricula. They include:

- a. **Utility:** The curriculum for the child should be based on the child's interests, needs and aspirations during his formative years.
- b. **Flexibility:** The curriculum should be flexible and not rigid. It must be capable of accommodating the changes in the child's interest and inclination.
- c. **Experiential:** The curriculum should be related to the child, and these experiences should be reinforced by presenting different kinds of activities, which will inspire the child to attempt a solution to the problem.
- d. **Close to life:** As far as possible the curriculum should include only those subjects which can be related to the child's pattern of life at that particular stage.

Education in Nigeria is based on a national philosophy. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) states that:

Nigeria's philosophy of education is therefore based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.

Implicit in the National Policy on Education were the five main national objectives of Nigeria, tagged 'National Philosophy'. These objectives were stated as follows:

- a. the provision of a free and democratic society;
- b. a just and egalitarian society;
- c. a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- d. a great and dynamic economy and;



e. a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The attainment of these five philosophies of the nation – Nigeria – is through the instrumentality of qualitative education at all levels of the national education system. The accomplishment of these national philosophies entails that the quality of instruction should be tailored towards inculcating, in all Nigerian children, values such as:

1. respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
2. faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
3. moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations; and
4. shared responsibility for the common good of society.

Key principles of the National Policy on Education (NPE) include:

- **Integration of national ideals:** Education is expected to promote national unity, social equity, and a sense of belonging to one's community and country.
- **Focus on skills and competencies:** The policy stresses the importance of practical skills, vocational training, and technological development to meet the needs of a developing country.
- **Democratic and inclusive education:** The policy emphasises inclusive education that caters for diverse cultural backgrounds to promote a democratic spirit and respect for human rights.
- **Curriculum reforms:** The national policy on education emphasised that the curriculum should be continuously reformed to address the challenges of national development, particularly in areas like science and technology, agriculture, and human resource development.

Nigeria's engagement in education is to ensure that the individual is fully integrated into a sound and effective citizen for his own development and contribution to the society. Education in Nigeria aims at equipping the child with saleable skills for individual and social fulfilment. For this to be achieved, certain basic criteria will have to be observed for a viable philosophy of education. Among these are:

1. It should be based on the nature of man and of society as conceived by Nigerian society.
2. The best type of knowledge worth having and how it is to be acquired;
3. It must rest on a value system or a theory of what it considers most valuable and worth having.

A genuine national philosophy of education must have these three distinct components.

From the foregoing, the role of curriculum in achieving national educational objectives cannot be overemphasised. In order to promote social change, the secondary school curriculum must be functional. That is, it should be designed so as to prepare the youth for specific problems they will meet after they leave school, both in terms of their job and in terms of social living.



Thus tradition and conventions should give way to need and utility. This implies that the school should always be as up-to-date as possible. And the curriculum should be such that it gives the pupil a requisite amount of emotional and intellectual maturity. A great deal of time, energy and thought should go into the planning of the school curriculum for the days ahead.

Furthermore, the curriculum should be such that through it the student acquires the techniques which are needed in the contemporary society – not outmoded techniques of innate ideas. It should give students a pervasive framework which will allow them to place in perspective present and future changes in their society. That is to say, the student should learn, through his school experience, to critically evaluate new ideas, new devices and new processes in the light of a hierarchy of values. The point here is that our school curriculum should be so organized that it allows scope for the consideration and examination of value questions by the students.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) actually currently operates under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) 9-3-4 system (9 years basic, 3 years senior secondary, 4 years tertiary). Secondary education is the education of children between 12 & 18 years. The new phase of secondary education under the 9-3-4 education system provides for a three (3)-year education programme with a two-tier system – junior and senior secondary school.

The broad aims of secondary education within the overall national objectives are:

- Preparation for useful living within the society and;
- Preparation for higher education.

The specific aims of secondary education are to:

- Diversify its curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after the secondary school course;
- Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
- Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the views and feelings of others, and appreciate values specified under the broad national aims.
- Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity.

The Federal Government of Nigeria avows to the regulation, supervision and inspection in order to ensure that all schools follow approved curricula and conform to the national policy on education. It also promises to ensure that the teacher-pupil ratio at this level of education shall be 1:40 and base its conduct on continuous assessment and national examination standards.

These aims are consistent with the aims of Nigerian education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. When explicated, these aims correspond to social development in that individuals are developed in their abilities not only as personal rights but also as a societal necessity.

Let us now proceed to the application of Classical and Deweyan philosophies to the curriculum of Basic Education for Social Transformation.



Basic Education Curriculum in Nigeria

Basic Education connotes 6 years of primary education and 3 years of Junior Secondary education. According to Igwe 2004; Basic education shall be both pre-vocational and academic. It shall be tuition-free, universal and compulsory, and students shall offer a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13 subjects. The rationale for exposing junior secondary school (JSS) students to these broad fields of knowledge is to identify their interests, abilities, talents, aptitudes, and potentials with a view to channelling students to where they are more likely to be useful to themselves and the society at large. The subjects include core subjects such as English studies, French, language of environment, one major Nigerian language (other than that of the environment), integrated science, social studies, citizenship education and introductory technology. It also has pre-vocational electives and non-prevocational electives. These include, Agric Science, business studies, home economics, religious knowledge, physical and health education and Arabic respectively.

From study of these subjects, learners are expected to imbibe the values and attitudes necessary for social transformation and national development. Civic education emphasises respect for human rights, democratic principles, good governance, integrity, and social justice. Social Studies on the other hand, is concerned with societal values system, family and communal responsibilities. It also, addresses cultural similarities and differences in Nigerian culture and calls on all cultural groups in Nigeria to appreciate their cultural similarities and differences and live together as one nation. Our social values system like right attitude to work, honesty and co-operation; and consequences for wrong attitude to work, dishonesty and non-co-operation are examined in the study of social studies. Furthermore, Religious and Moral Education (including Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Religious Studies) promote spiritual values, ethical re-orientation, and moral conduct. Security Education can help to build learners' awareness of personal safety and security, peace-building and conflict prevention. The curriculum of studies at the basic education level help in mental reasoning, problem-solving, value re-orientation and critical thinking skills. Moreso, they can distill values of self-reliance, dignity of labour, and honesty in business enterprise. These subjects align with Nigerian educational objectives in development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen; promoting national consciousness, values and national unity, promotion of the right type of values and attitudes for individual survival and societal development, and the fostering of self-reliance and entrepreneurship in learners. These educational provisions equally align with Platonic, Aristotelian and Deweyan educational philosophies. These philosophies, emphasise quality education for social relevance-education as a process of living and not a preparation for future living. Platonic & Aristotelian philosophies emphasise moral and intellectual virtues in learner's education. This agrees with Nigerian educational goals.

Furthermore, Deweyan philosophies recognise comprehensive and holistic development of the learner through the skills of sciences, arts and vocational studies. He believes that true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of social situations in which he finds himself. This positions the child to be able to act in unity with others and emerge from his original narrowness of action and feelings and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs. (Okere, 2022). In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey argues that progressive education's focus is to socialise learners to become productive members of their social system. This also, aligns with Nigerian



education at the basic level. These curriculum provisions can help to instill social transformation and national development.

The Junior Secondary school certificate is based on continuous assessment and examination set by the state examination boards. Successful students at the Junior Certificate Examination are streamed into; Senior Secondary School, Technical College; and Out-of-School Vocational Training Centres and other apprenticeship schemes based on academic performance and vocational interest.

Senior secondary education is for a duration of three (3) years. The curriculum is to broaden students' knowledge and outlook. Every student should take a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 subjects. This includes the English language and one Nigeria language, biology, government, economics, mathematics, physics, chemistry, literature in English, agricultural science, history, vocational subjects, and a wide range of elective courses open for selection. The Senior School Certificate is based on continuous assessment. At the end of senior secondary school, students sit for the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the National Examinations Council (NECO) or the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB). Certificates are awarded at the completion of this stage (Ofoego, 2022).

In 2025/2026 academic session, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) under the auspices of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) reviewed the curriculum of basic education. This revision is designed to provide a broad foundation of knowledge, critical thinking, and civic responsibility. Under the new curriculum, Basic Education subjects are categorised into Humanities, Sciences and Business along-side compulsory general courses.

The review emphasises 21st Century Skills, including mandatory digital literacy (AI, Robotics, Coding) and vocational training (Solar installation, GSM repair) to foster entrepreneurship. Key changes in the curriculum are: Reduced subject loads, and the introduction of compulsory skills/vocational subjects. Basic 1-3 subjects are reduced to 9-10 subjects, Basic 4-6 subjects are reduced to 10-12, Junior Secondary School (J.S.S -Upper Basic): 12-14.

Senior Secondary School (S.S.S): 8-9 and Technical Schools, 9-11 subjects. The compulsory skills/vocational subjects are Digital skills (Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Coding and Cybersecurity). The Vocational subjects are Agriculture, Bakery, Garment Making and Event Management. This curriculum review focuses on learner-centred approach, aiming to move from rote learning and memorisation to practical and functional knowledge. It also aims to better align Nigerian education with global standards and enhance employability by equipping students with practical and marketable skills upon graduation.

The Federal and State Government of Nigeria have the responsibilities for the funding, the training of teachers, the teachers' selection and recruitment, the provision of classrooms and learning centres, and the provision of instructional and learning materials.

Despite the efforts of State and Federal Governments at improving Basic Education in Nigeria, the education system is still facing a lot of challenges. These are discussed below.



School-Based Challenges to Social Transformation

Education is a dynamic process for sustainable national development. It equips the individual with useful knowledge, skills, and competencies for survival and for contributing towards societal development. The challenges facing education in Nigeria are; Pedagogic/curriculum challenge, Infrastructural/funding gap, inconsistent educational policies, Poor teacher training and Socio-economic challenge. These problems are discussed below.

Pedagogic/Curriculum challenge: Achieving the goals of the Nigerian education system depends on effective and well-trained teachers. However, when teachers lack modern training and pedagogical knowledge, the realisation of educational goals will be adversely affected. Curriculum overload can also, pose serious threats to effective school system. Curriculum of basic education is heavily content-laden. Subjects designed to instil values-such as civic education, social studies, religious studies, are often crammed into already congested time table without sufficient time for in-depth discussion or moral reasoning. This can lead to overstuffing of learners with shallow knowledge. There is need for teachers with sound professional competence and adaptable curriculum materials that meet the needs of the learners.

Infrastructural/Funding gap: The funding for education is an important indication of the quality of its output. Most of the time, so much money is spent on efforts at international conflicts resolution, with relatively less in favour of education (Mkpa, 1999). Educational programmes are inadequately funded, while infrastructural and instructional facilities are in short supply. There is lack of modern science laboratories, libraries, and digital tools needed for functional education. Adequate funding is therefore, strongly advocated for addressing these obvious challenges.

Inconsistent Educational policies: Educational policy formulation in Nigeria has not been consistent. Most of the time, educational policies are based on Nigerian philosophy of education which encompasses the major concepts; integration of all citizens, entrenchment and internalisation of enduring societal value systems, equal opportunities for all citizens, and socio-political and economic self-sufficiency. However, Ofoego 2017; has decried the Nigerian philosophy of education which she said is based on foreign orientation. Okoh 2003; has noted that the Nigerian educational policy is still tied to an apron string of Europe and that Nigeria does not have a clear perception of what education is and what needs education ought to fulfill within the Nigerian context. He believed that the underlying purpose of education today is either to turn the Nigerian into a “Black-European” or to enable him to imitate and acquire the material achievements and possessions of ex-colonial masters. From the foregoing, the ideologies and value systems espoused by formal education in Nigeria, are not Nigerian but are rooted in colonial heritage. This ugly situation must stop for a better education system in Nigeria.

Poor Teacher training: The teacher is a vital personality in the education process. He is the fulcrum on which the education the education wheels revolve. Teachers are responsible for the translation and implementation of educational policies and curriculum and the all-round development of the child. For the UBE scheme to achieve its objectives, the have to be professionally competent, motivated and experienced teachers who would impact the desired knowledge to the students. However, poor teacher training and non-availability and utilisation of instructional materials for effective lesson delivery can affect instruction. Obaji 2017; observes that instructional materials are scarce in secondary schools and as a result, teachers



resort to chalk-talking because they have no materials which the students can see, touch, smell or hear during lessons. Therefore, teachers' training, qualification and experience, teaching methods and techniques, availability and utilisation of instructional materials and adequacy of content should be provided to ensure optimum implementation of the objectives.

Socio-Economic challenge: With the current scenario in Nigeria's education system, graduate unemployment and poverty levels are rising so high. This can pose serious challenges to socio-economic and political development in Nigeria and threaten the foundation of Nigerian education. There is need therefore, for the government and all stakeholders in education to rise to this challenge for a better education system.

CONCLUSION

Education in Nigeria is an organised system to equip the individuals with saleable knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies for both personal and societal development. The school is an institution of society that should be committed to societal transformation and ensure that individuals are socially relevant, economically efficient and politically conscious of their rights, duties, aspirations and roles in societal development. There is, therefore, a need for quality education that can cater for individual and collective talents and potentialities, address curriculum and pedagogical challenges and fund education adequately to meet national and global aspirations.

The paper concludes that curriculum development and sound pedagogic practices are necessary in driving a nation's philosophy of education for the realisation of educational objectives. A well-developed curriculum can ensure that educational objectives translate to behavioural and cognitive outcomes among learners and improve the learner's intellectual, social, and emotional skills, which he can apply to both personal and societal development. This can only be realised if the curriculum and pedagogic practices align with the child's psycho-social and intellectual development.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations have been suggested:

1. There should be a periodic review of curriculum materials by relevant stakeholders in Nigerian education to ensure their relevance and adequacy to the interests and needs of the child.
2. Teachers in the nation's education system should be trained and updated from time to time on the review of curriculum materials in order to adjust their pedagogic practices.
3. The government should fund education adequately in the provision of teachers and learners' welfare, in infrastructural development and in creating the enabling environment for both teaching and non-teaching staff.
4. The government should also address the issues of education policy formulation in a manner that is devoid of inconsistencies and excessive reliance on foreign orientations.



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